

October 16, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-02-058

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by the Region IV staff on this date.

Facility

Kleinfelder, Inc.
Tempe, Arizona
License No.: 7-409
Arizona Agreement State Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

☐ Notification of Unusual Event
☐ Alert
☐ Site Area Emergency
☐ General Emergency
☒ Not Applicable

SUBJECT: STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE RECOVERED

DESCRIPTION:

On October 15, 2002, the Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency (the Agency) notified NRC's Operations Center that a previously reported stolen portable gauge had been recovered.

On April 19, 2001, Kleinfelder, Inc., an Arizona licensee, had reported the theft of a Campbell-Pacific Model MC3 (Serial No. M370403663) and a 1999 Dodge RAM 1500 truck from a residence in Tempe, Arizona. The gauge was locked in its transport container and chained in the back of the truck. The gauge contained a nominal 296.0 megabequerels (8 millicuries) of cesium-137 and a nominal 1.48 gigabequerels (40 millicuries) americium-241/beryllium. The licensee reported the theft to the local police and offered a reward for the return of the gauge.

On October 12, 2002, at approximately 7:15 p.m. (MST), the Agency duty officer was informed that the Phoenix Police Department bomb squad had found a device containing radioactive material after receiving a tip from a member of the public. Upon investigation, the Agency determined that the device was the gauge that had been reported missing by Kleinfelder on April 19, 2001. The locks had been removed from the device, but the device was in good condition. The external surface of the device and transportation case was monitored for radioactive contamination, but no contamination was detected. The device will be returned to the licensee.

The state of Arizona plans to inform Mexico, the FBI, and the states of Colorado, California, Utah, Nevada, and New Mexico.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence from the NRC Operations Center on October 15, 2002. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, OSTP and the Region's PAO and SLO.

This information has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 12:30 p.m. (CDT) on October 16, 2002.

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